

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TAIPEI 03850

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SUBJECT: WITHDRAWAL FROM CERTAIN JOINT US-ROC ACTIVITIES:
CIVIL AVIATION ADVISORY GROUP (CAAG)

REF: STATE 101230

1. CAAG CHIEF HARRY J. BURTON HAS REPORTED TO ECON COUN
SUBSTANCE OF CONVERSATION HE RECENTLY HAD WITH GENERAL
Y. T. MAO, DIRECTOR-GENERAL, CIVIL AERONAUTICS ADMINIS-
TRATION. DURING CONVERSATION, BURTON STATED THAT WITH
TAOYUAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT NEARING COMPLETION, WORKLOAD
OF CAAG WOULD DIMINISH CONSIDERABLY. BURTON WAS RECOM-
MENDING TO FAA, THEREFORE, THAT (A) WHEN HE DEPARTED
TAIWAN AT END OF JUNE 1978 HE NOT BE REPLACED AND (B)
THREE REMAINING CAAG MEMBERS SHOULD BE PHASED OUT BEFORE
END OF FY 1979.

2. GENERAL MAO REPLIED THAT GROC IS INTERESTED IN RE-
TAINING CAAG FOR "SEVERAL MORE YEARS" TO ASSIST IN CARRY-
ING OUT SEVERAL MAJOR PROJECTS NOW IN PLANNING STAGE,
E.G., AUTOMATION OF FLIGHT DATA PROCESSING, ESTABLISHMENT
OF ARTS-TYPE TRACON IN TAICHUNG, AND ESTABLISHMENT OF
TERMINAL RADAR SYSTEM FOR HUALIEN APPROACH CONTROL
FACILITY. MAO HAS ALREADY SUBMITTED REQUEST TO MINISTRY
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OF COMMUNICATIONS FOR FUNDS TO CONTINUE FOUR-MEMBER CAAG
IN FY 1979. ONCE FUNDING APPROVAL OBTAINED, MAO WILL BE
SUBMITTING FORMAL REQUEST FOR RENEWAL CAAG AGREEMENT
THROUGH FY 1979 VIA ESTABLISHED FMS CHANNEL. HE IS HOPE-
FUL REQUEST CAN BE SUBMITTED BY MID-JULY 1978.

3. IN VIEW OF GENERAL MAO'S COMMENTS, WE SHOULD RE-

CONSIDER TIMETABLE CONTAINED REFTEL. IF WE WAIT UNTIL AUGUST TO TELL MAO THAT WE DO NOT PLAN TO EXTEND CAAG AGREEMENT BEYOND JANUARY 1979, A FORMAL REQUEST FROM GROC FOR EXTENSION THROUGH FY 1979 WILL ALREADY HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED. IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO INFORM MAO OF OUR PLANS BEFOREHAND TO ENABLE HIM TO FORMULATE REQUEST IN TERMS OF WHAT WE ARE WILLING TO DO INSTEAD OF WHAT HE WOULD LIKE US TO DO.

4. BURTON IS NOT AWARE OF REFTEL. HOWEVER, HE HAS BEEN TOLD THAT EMBASSY CONSIDERS ESSENTIAL MISSION OF CAAG WILL BE COMPLETED WHEN TAOYUAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT OPENS EARLY IN 1979. BURTON AGREES BUT HE PERSONALLY IS IN FAVOR OF PHASING OUT CAAG GRADUALLY DURING FY 1979 IN EVENT THERE ARE TEETHING PROBLEMS AT TAOYUAN, PARTICULARLY IN AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL AND ELECTRONICS EQUIPMENT UTILIZATION. HE HAS COMMUNICATED HIS VIEWS TO FAA/EASTERN AREA OPERATIONS BRANCH/AIA-220.

5. IF DEPARTMENT HAS NO OBJECTION, EMBASSY PROPOSES THAT ECON COUN INFORM GENERAL MAO BEFORE JULY 1 THAT USG IS WILLING TO RENEW CAAG AGREEMENT BUT ONLY UNTIL JANUARY 31, 1979. POINT ALSO WOULD BE MADE THAT FUTURE REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE WOULD BE CONSIDERED ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. GENERAL MAO UNDOUBTEDLY WILL RAISE STRONG OBJECTIONS TO OUR DECISION. IF HE ARGUES THAT GROC HAS NEED

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OF CAAG FOR INDEFINITE FUTURE, RESPONSE WILL BE TO POINT OUT THAT IT WAS NEVER ENVISAGED THAT CAAG WOULD BE PERMANENT INSTITUTION. MOREOVER, IF GROC NEEDS ASSISTANCE ON SPECIFIC FUTURE PROJECTS, WE WOULD BE WILLING CONSIDER REQUESTS ON CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. MAO MAY THEN REQUEST THAT AGREEMENT BE EXTENDED THROUGH FY 1979 WITH PHASEOUT OF CAAG PERSONNEL TO TAKE PLACE GRADUALLY DURING THE YEAR. FRANKLY, APART FROM OUR ARGUMENT THAT CAAG WILL NO LONGER BE NEEDED ONCE TAOYUAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT COMPLETED, WE HAVE NO CONVINCING ARGUMENT WE CAN MAKE FOR NOT EXTENDING AGREEMENT ADDITIONAL EIGHT MONTHS UNTIL END OF FY 1979.

6. UNLESS THERE IS SOMETHING SACRED ABOUT JANUARY 1979 TERMINATION DATE, PERHAPS WE SHOULD RECONSIDER AND AGREE TO LET CAAG PHASEOUT TAKE PLACE GRADUALLY IN FY 1979. OUR OBJECTIVE OF WITHDRAWING FROM YET ANOTHER US-ROC JOINT ACTIVITY WOULD STILL BE REALIZED BUT OUR ACTION COULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS HASTY OR UNDULY DRAMATIC. LATTER POINT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT SINCE WE WOULD AVOID CHARGE OF PULLING CAAG OUT AT TIME NEW AIRPORT OPENS BUT BEFORE ALL BUGS MAY HAVE BEEN ELIMINATED. U.S. CARRIERS AND PASSENGERS WILL MAKE EXTENSIVE USE OF NEW AIRPORT. UNGER

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